Shahbad, Hospet, Gangawati, Kanakpura, Yadgir, Dandeli, Siraguppa. Due to funds constraints in the X Plan, these proposals could not be considered and the State Government of Karnataka had been informed accordingly.

Under the National Lake Conservation Plan (NLCP), in addition to the earlier sanctioned schemes, the Government of Karnataka has submitted proposals for 7 lakes. Of these, 3 proposals have been approved. In respect of remaining 4 proposals namely; Bellakki tank at Shimoga, Kote Tavarekere lake at Chickmagalore, Tripuranthkeshwar lake and Kundawada lake at Davangere, the State Government has been requested to provide clarification.

Desalination plant in Chennai

626. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state;

(a) whether approval for desalination plant in Chennai has been given;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Ministry of Environment and Forests, after examining the proposals pertaining to setting up of 100 MLD Desalination Plant of M/s Chennai Water Desalination Limited, Chennai submitted by Government of Tamil Nadu, has sought additional clarifications *vide* Ministry's letter of 18.1.2006. The project authorities have not yet submitted the same.

Preservation of waste lands

627.SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that although there are thousands of lakes, ponds, marshes, lagoons, estuaries, backwaters and

mangrove swamps which are vital to the country's water needs, foods production and biodiversity, the environmental policy has largely failed to acknowledge their contribution;

(b) whether it is a fact that despite their niche status and vital economic role,State Governments classify them in land records only as Wastelands; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to preserve its wastelands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) The draft National Environmental Policy (NEP) acknowledges the contribution made by lakes, ponds, marshes, lagoons, estuaries, backwaters and other wetlands and mangrove swamps. The draft NEP envisages putting in place regulatory mechanism for identified valuable wetlands; developing a National Inventory of Wetlands; enhanced participation of local communities in conservation and development of mangroves, and eco-tourism strategies among others.

(b) and (c) The State Government are increasingly aware of the niche status and vital ecological and economic roles of lakes, ponds, marshes, lagoons, estuaries, backwaters and other wetlands, including mangrove swamps. Accroding to the Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development, the Wastelands Classification system categories. 13 land categories. These are 1.Gullied and /or Ravinous land, 2. Land with or without Scrub 3. Waterlogged and Marshy land, 4.Land affected by salinity/Alkalinity, 5. Shifting cultivation, 6. Under Utilized/Degraded Notified Forest Land, 7. Degraded Pastures/Grazing Land, 8.Degraded Land under Plantation Crop, 9.Sands (Riverine/Costal/Desert), 10.Mining/ Industrial Wasteland, 11. Barren Rocky Area, 12. Steep Sloping Area, and 13. Snow covered and /or/Glacial Area.

The Ministry of environment and Forests provides assistance on 100% grant basis for Conversation and Management of Wetlands, Mangroves, and Coral reefs. It also provides assistance on 70:30 cost sharing basis between Central and State Govrnments for Conversation and Management of polluted lakes under the National Lake Conversation Plan (NLCP). The Department of Land Resources implements mainly

three area development programmes viz. Integrated wastelands Development Programme (IWDP) the Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) and the Desert Development Programme (DDP).

Environmental Performance Index

628. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a pilot nation by nation study of environmental performance named 2006 Environmental Performance Index shows *inter-alia* that India ranks amongst the 20 lowest scoring countries in the critical environmental goals ranging from clean drinking water, low ozone levels to sustainable fisheries and low greenhouse gas emissions;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to improve its rankings?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The Pilot 2006 Environmental Performance Index has been developed by the Center for Environmental Law & Policy at Yale University and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) at Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. Using 16 indicators, six core policy categories and the two broad objectives of Environmental Health and Eco-system Vitality, the Environmental Performance Index Framework has ranked India 118 out of a total of 133 countries.

The position of the countries at the bottom of the rankings has been attributed by the authors to several factors such as low Environmental Health scores, densely populated industrializing countries with stressed ecosystems, arid states with limited natural resource endowments, lack of capacity for aggressive pollution control or systematic natural resource management.

(c) The Government of India accords high priority to environment protection and sustainable development. These concerns are duly reflected in our planning process. The Government of India has already